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# Special Nationwide Worship and the Book of Common Prayer in England, Wales and Ireland, 1533–1642<sup>1</sup>

*Natalie Mears*

The Book of Common Prayer (hereafter BCP) is widely regarded as the cornerstone of the Church of England and as a masterpiece of the English language. It was not, however – as is commonly assumed – the only vernacular liturgy authorized for parish worship in post-Reformation England and Wales and Ireland. It is well known that from the second half of the sixteenth century some parishes voluntarily celebrated anniversaries, such as accession days, coronation days and the monarch's birthday and from the early seventeenth century parishes were obliged to celebrate official annual anniversaries – Gowrie Day (5 August) and the Fifth of November – and that some of these occasions had their own liturgies.<sup>2</sup> But parishes were also commonly ordered by the state to observe special services, prayers and public fasts during times of crisis (such as war, famine and bad weather) and thanksgiving prayers and services for celebrations (including military victories and the birth of royal children). From the break with Rome until the outbreak of Civil War in August 1642, there were 94 occasions of special worship observed in England and Wales, 6 in Ireland and one (in September 1641) ordered jointly for England and

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<sup>1</sup> The research for this essay was conducted as part of the research project, 'British state prayers, fasts and thanksgivings, 1540s to 1940s', led by Philip Williamson, Stephen Taylor and myself and funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, grant E007481/1. I would like to thank my co-investigators, Alex Barber and Alec Ryrie for their comments on previous drafts of this essay.

<sup>2</sup> J.E. Neale, 'November 17th,' in *ibid.*, *Essays in Elizabethan History* (London, 1958), pp. 9–20; Roy Strong, 'The popular celebration of the Accession Day of Queen Elizabeth I,' *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 21 (1958), pp. 86–103; David Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells: National Memory and the Protestant Calendar in Elizabethan and Stuart England* (London, 1989); Ronald Hutton, *The Rise and Fall of Merry England: the Ritual Year, 1400–1700* (Oxford, 1994); F.C. Eccles, 'The English thanksgiving service for King James' delivery from the Gowrie conspiracy', *Scottish Historical Review*, 8 (1911), pp. 366–76.



Wales and Scotland (see Table 2.1). Though the earliest occasions of special worship after the break with Rome followed the Sarum or other local rite, new prayers or whole liturgies began to be commissioned from 1544 and were subsequently used in all occasions but until their abolition in September 1641. This was despite the fact that from 1552 the BCP incorporated ‘occasional prayers’ to be said in times of war, plague, bad weather, dearth and famine. Moreover, though it is impossible to calculate the total number of services of special worship during this period, 71 English and Welsh occasions and all but one of those in Ireland were celebrated multiple times: daily, weekly, three times a week or monthly, often for weeks or months. In short, public worship in the parishes of England, Wales and Ireland was frequently conducted without recourse to the official liturgy by order of the state.<sup>3</sup>

Why did successive regimes deliberately diverge from official liturgies and invest so much effort, time and money in commissioning, writing, printing and distributing new prayers and liturgies for parishes to use? Why did they do so after the second BCP had provided ‘occasional prayers’ which could have been used in a third of all occasions of special worship? And why were new prayers for other regular occasions – such as thanksgivings for the safe delivery of queen consorts in childbirth – not added to the BCP in subsequent revisions and editions?

Despite the long history of special worship ordered throughout the kingdom, these questions have yet to be asked, let alone answered. Special worship was a subject of historical, theological and antiquarian interest in the eighteenth and more particularly the nineteenth centuries, when it was still a common occurrence and a live political issue that raised questions about the royal supremacy, the reform of the BCP and the status of Roman Catholics and nonconformists in national religious life.<sup>4</sup> The focus of attention was on collecting the specially commissioned forms of prayer and compiling lists of occasions, resulting in William Keatinge Clay’s Parker Society volume covering the reign of Elizabeth I as well as other lists in *Notes and Queries* and other journals.<sup>5</sup> In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, attention has focused primarily on the ‘political’

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<sup>3</sup> Scotland had its own tradition of Protestant, nationwide special worship from 1560 but, because the ordering process and the reasons for ordering occasions were different to those in England, Wales and Ireland and because the Kirk did not adopt the Book of Common Prayer, this essay will not deal with these occasions even after the union of crowns in 1603.

<sup>4</sup> Philip Williamson, ‘State prayers, fasts and thanksgivings: public worship in Britain 1830–1897’, *Past and Present*, 200 (2008), pp. 169–222.

<sup>5</sup> *Liturgical Services: Liturgies and occasional forms of prayer set forth in the reign of Queen Elizabeth*, ed. William Keatinge Clay (Parker Society, Cambridge, 1847).



aspects of special worship.<sup>6</sup> John Cooper has argued that nationwide special worship helped shore up the authority of the Tudor regime, while Steve Hindle has argued that it was used to maintain loyalty and order in times of crisis.<sup>7</sup> Analysis of the religious dimensions is limited to a short article by C.J. Kitching, who concluded that it was a means to inculcate ideas of divine providence beyond Puritan circles.<sup>8</sup>

This essay probes the religious dimension further in light of the questions raised by the preference of successive regimes for commissioning new prayers and services. It begins by describing the origins and nature of special worship before tracing the development of special prayers and liturgies commissioned for parish use, analysing the patterns of commissioning and the investment (in time, effort and money) this represented. It then explains why after 1552 regimes continued to commission special prayers rather than use the BCP. The essay ends by reflecting on how this study of special worship changes our understanding of religious conformity and nonconformity in early modern England, Wales and Ireland.

## I

Special worship was not a new phenomenon of the post-Reformation church. It had a long history in the British Isles, dating from at least the early fifth century in Ireland, the early eleventh century in England and probably from the late thirteenth century in Wales.<sup>9</sup> Rooted in Old Testament

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<sup>6</sup> H.R. Trevor-Roper, 'The fast sermons of the Long Parliament', in *Essays in British History: Presented to Sir Keith Feiling*, ed. Hugh Trevor-Roper (London, 1964), pp. 85–138.

<sup>7</sup> J.P.D. Cooper, '"Oh Lorde save the kyng": Tudor royal propaganda and the power of prayer', in *Authority and Consent in Tudor England: Essays Presented to C.S.L. Davies*, ed. G.W. Bernard and S.J. Gunn (Aldershot, 2002), pp. 179–96; J.P.D. Cooper, *Propaganda and the Tudor State: Political culture in the West Country* (Oxford, 2003), esp. chs 1 and 8; Steve Hindle, 'Dearth, fasting and alms: the campaign for general hospitality in late Elizabethan England', *Past and Present*, 172 (2001), pp. 44–86.

<sup>8</sup> C.J. Kitching, '"Prayers fit for the time": fasting and prayer in response to national crises in the reign of Elizabeth I', in *Monks, Hermits and the Ascetic Tradition*, ed. W.J. Sheils (Studies in Church History, 22; Oxford, 1985), pp. 241–50.

<sup>9</sup> It is unclear when special worship began in Wales, but it is likely to have occurred shortly after the principality was incorporated into the English crown in 1284; orders for special worship in England were issued more systematically in the 1290s because of wars with Scotland and France. 'The Book of Howth', in *Calendar of the Carew Manuscripts Preserved in the Archiepiscopal Library at Lambeth*, ed. J.S. Brewer and William Bullen (6 vols, London, 1867–71), VI, pp. 16–17; *The laws of the Kings of England from Edmund to Henry I*, ed. A.J. Robertson (Cambridge, 1925), pp. 114–17; W.R. Jones, 'The English church and royal propaganda during the Hundred Years War', *Journal of British Studies*, 19 (1979), pp. 18–30; J. Robin Wright, *The Church and the English Crown, 1305–1334: A study based on the register of Archbishop Walter Reynolds* (Toronto, 1980), pp. 348–



precedent, special worship was predicated on beliefs in divine providence: that God had mapped out all events that would happen on earth, large and small, at the time of Creation ('general' or 'universal' providence) and that he could and did intervene in, or disrupt, everyday life ('special' or 'particular' providence) in response to the realm's collective godliness or sin.<sup>10</sup> As Alexandra Walsham has shown, such ideas were at least as central to post-Reformation Protestant thought as they were to pre- and post-Reformation Catholicism.<sup>11</sup> Special worship took two forms: petitionary prayers, services and fasts seeking divine intervention in earthly events such as war, famine, disease, bad weather and earthquakes; and thanksgivings offered in gratitude for divine aid, such as military victories or the birth of royal children. Though some occasions were initiated by the higher clergy, all were ordered by the crown.<sup>12</sup> This was because, after Henry VIII ordered the English litany to be used for all services by the autumn of 1545<sup>13</sup> and especially after the establishment of the BCP by statute in 1549, changes to the authorized liturgy could only be made by the crown. But it also reflected a long-standing practice in which the crown, since the 1290s, had requested or, increasingly, ordered special worship in all parishes.

In the pre-Reformation church, special worship was conducted according to the prescriptions for services *in causa necessitatis* in the *Processionale*. As there was no single, authoritative *Processionale*, the format and content of services varied across the kingdom, though many cathedrals and parishes followed the prescriptions of the dominant rite in England, the Sarum Use.<sup>14</sup> Despite the vicissitudes of Henrician religious

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60; D.W. Burton, 'Requests for prayers and royal propaganda under Edward I', *Thirteenth Century England III: Proceedings of the Newcastle-upon-Tyne Conference*, ed. P.R. Cross and S.D. Lloyd (Woodbridge, 1991), pp. 26–8; A.K. McHardy, 'Religious ritual and political persuasion: the case of England in the Hundred Years War', *International Journal of Moral and Social Studies*, 3 (1988), pp. 41–57; A.K. McHardy, 'Some reflections of Edward III's use of propaganda,' *The Age of Edward III*, ed. J.S. Bothwell (York, 2001), pp. 171–89; Andrea Ruddick, 'National sentiment and religious vocabulary in fourteenth-century England', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 60 (2009), pp. 1–18.

<sup>10</sup> Alexandra Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1999), p. 12.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, *passim*.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas Cranmer to Edmund Bonner, 19 July [1541], Guildhall Library, London, [hereafter GL], Guildhall MS 9531/12: 1, fo. 45r [recorded among material for 1543, but some items are out of sequence and there was no invasion of Hungary in 1543]; Matthew Parker to William Cecil, 23 July 1563, BL, Lansdowne MS 6, fo. 154r; Edmund Grindal to same, 30 July, BL, Lansdowne MS 6, fos 156r–157r.

<sup>13</sup> Cranmer appears to have ordered the litany to be used every Sunday in his diocese in the summer of 1545. Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer: A life* (New Haven and London, 1996), p. 332.

<sup>14</sup> Kenneth Stevenson, 'Worship by the Book' in *The Oxford Guide to the Book of Common Prayer: A worldwide survey*, ed. Charles C. Hefling and Cynthia L. Shattuck (Oxford, 2006), p. 10; *Processionale ad usum insignis ac praeclarae ecclesiae Sarum*, ed.



policy, the format and content of petitionary and thanksgiving services remained consistent with this practice until 1544<sup>15</sup> when Henry VIII commissioned Thomas Cranmer to compose a new, uniform litany to be used to seek divine support for his military campaign in France.<sup>16</sup> *An exhortation vnto prayer* was based on the Sarum Rite's petitionary service *in causa necessitatis* but it was in English and was much shorter, omitting the penitential psalms and invocations to the saints while retaining other prescribed texts, notably the versicles in time of war.<sup>17</sup> Structurally, it was also different. It began with a lengthy exhortation on prayer, teaching parishioners what they should pray for and how. The procession followed, accompanied by the litany which began with a series of suffrages and then prayers for the king, Queen Katherine, Prince Edward, the bishops and parish ministers, the privy council, the nobility, all magistrates and, finally, the people. There were further suffrages for peace, grace and mercy, followed by the Lord's Prayer, and two sets of versicles and prayers.<sup>18</sup> This litany was used again the following year during Henry's naval campaign against France and probably in subsequent penitential special services: it had been authorized for use on all 'accustomed days' (that is, Wednesdays and Fridays) in 1545.<sup>19</sup>

Edward VI's accession ushered in a period of liturgical experimentation for occasions of special worship. From May 1548, when the privy council ordered prayers on Sundays and holy days to be said during the war with Scotland, specially commissioned prayers were inserted into the Henrician litany or, from 1549, the BCP service. Such prayers either replaced one of

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W.G. Henderson (Leeds, 1882), pp. 164–5; Terence Bailey, *The Processions of Sarum and the Western Church* (Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Studies and Texts, 21; Toronto, 1971), pp. 12–14, 25–6, 51–3, 128–32.

<sup>15</sup> *A Chronicle of England During the Reigns of the Tudors, from AD 1485 to 1559*, by Charles Wriothesley, *Windsor Herald*, ed. William Douglas Hamilton (2 vols, Camden Society, Westminster, 1875–77), I, pp. 22, 32, 64, 65–7, 69.

<sup>16</sup> Royal mandate to Cranmer, 8 June 1544, Lambeth Palace Library [hereafter LPL], Cranmer Register, I, fos 48v–49r [misdated to 1545 in *Miscellaneous Writings and Letters of Thomas Cranmer*, ed. John Edmund Cox (Parker Society, Cambridge, 1846), p. 495 n8; this part of the register is in chronological confusion]; *An exhortation vnto prayer thought mete by the kinges maiestie, and his clergy, to be read to the people in euery church afore processyons. Also a letanie with suffrages to be said or song in the tyme of the said processyons* ([London, 1544]: RSTC 10620).

<sup>17</sup> The versicles taken from the Sarum Rite begin with 'From our enemies defend vs, O Christ' and end at 'Graciously heare vs, O lorde Christe'. *Exhortation vnto prayer*, sigs. Cii'–Cii'.

<sup>18</sup> *Exhortation vnto prayer*, sigs. Ai'–Civ'.

<sup>19</sup> Privy council to Cranmer, 10 August 1545, LPL, Cranmer Register, I, fos 26v–27r; F.R. Brightman, 'The litany of Henry VIII', *English Historical Review*, 24 (1909), pp. 101–4.



the collects or were inserted between the collects and the communion.<sup>20</sup> Then, in June 1551, a complete new liturgy, *A thanks geuing to God used in Christes churche*, was commissioned and authorized to be used for petitionary services during the outbreak of the 'sweating sickness' instead of the liturgy in the BCP. Though no evidence survives about the liturgy's commissioning or authorship, it seems likely that the Edwardian regime chose to commission a full liturgy because the 'sweating sickness' was one of the greatest crises that the realms had faced for many decades. It was the first major epidemic of any disease for some time;<sup>21</sup> it spread across all parts of England and Wales; it killed c.15,000 people in a few months, and the onset of symptoms was extremely rapid and usually fatal. *A thanks geuing to God* conformed neither to the structure of services as defined by the BCP nor to the texts (prayers, psalms and readings) prescribed for daily services. It began with a lengthy exhortation instead of the prescribed scriptural sentences and with the call to confession, 'Dearly beloved brethren ...'. It then followed the BCP service for morning prayer until the Lord's Prayer,<sup>22</sup> after which two new versicles were recited by the minister and choir. These were followed by psalms 25, 28 and 30, which replaced the Venite and prescribed psalms. There was no Old Testament reading, Benedictus, Benedicte, Magnificant, Te Deum or Jubilate Deo and the New Testament reading (Romans 13) was read before, rather than after, the Nunc Dimittis. The Nunc Dimittis was followed by a versicle beginning 'Deale fauourably with vs o mercifull Lorde'. The creed, Lord's Prayer and prescribed prayers and collects were not said. The service ended with a collect on repentance and the collect for the king.<sup>23</sup>

*A thanks geuing to God* marked a turning point in the liturgical provision for special worship: after this, full liturgies were commissioned for more than half the occasions of special worship until 1641. Special liturgies were usually commissioned in response to national disasters (such as plagues and bad weather) or plots against Queen Elizabeth, which were regarded as signs of God's displeasure and warnings about the realm's collective sins. They were also used for thanksgiving services when these disasters or crises

<sup>20</sup> Privy council to Cranmer, 6 May 1548, LPL, Cranmer Register, I, fo. 55v; Edward VI to the bishops, 18 June 1551, TNA: PRO, SP10/13/30, fo. 62r; *A prayer for victorie and peace* (London, 1549: RSTC 16503); *Wriothelsey's Chronicle*, II, pp. 16–18, 20.

<sup>21</sup> There were serious outbreaks of plague in the 1540s and 1550s in which the annual death rate was at least twice the average, but Paul Slack shows that these outbreaks may have been localized. Paul Slack, *The Impact of Plague in Tudor and Stuart England* (London, 1985), pp. 59–60.

<sup>22</sup> It is presumed that the minister said the Absolution, though this is not specified in the instructions.

<sup>23</sup> TNA: PRO, SP10/13/30, fo. 62r; *A thanks geuing to God used in Christes churche* (London, 1551: RSTC 16504).



diminished and God's mercy appeared to have been obtained. Successive regimes also continued the Edwardian practice of adding new prayers to the BCP service on occasions of anxiety or celebration. These were usually commissioned when the realm sought God's help in a forthcoming action or event, such as military campaigns or the pregnancy of the queen consort, and for thanksgivings when these events were over. Regimes often issued several prayers at the same time that could be used in rotation over weeks and months but rarely gave instructions on where these prayers were to be inserted in the service. For instance, the prayers issued in 1590 were ordered to be read after the Lord's Prayer, but it is unclear if this was usual practice.<sup>24</sup> In addition, the Elizabethan regime also modified the BCP service in other ways. For instance, in 1570 (1570-E), thanksgiving services after the suppression of the Northern Rising comprised the usual BCP service, followed by the homily on obedience to which was added a new prayer at the end of each part.<sup>25</sup> In 1585 (1585-E1), thanksgiving services for failure of the Parry Plot followed the standard BCP service but required ministers to read out Parry's confession after their sermon, followed by a new prayer for the queen and psalm 21 'or some other Psalme to the like effect', to be said or sung.<sup>26</sup>

The special liturgies developed during Elizabeth's reign had a lasting effect on early modern special worship because they defined the structure and format of services until at least 1641. The liturgies followed two common patterns, both of which (unlike the earlier *A thankes geuing to God*) were based more closely on the structure of morning and evening prayer services in the BCP. The first format, established either in 1560 or 1563,<sup>27</sup> made significant changes to the BCP service and required different liturgical formats to be used on different days of the week (Sundays, Wednesdays and Fridays).<sup>28</sup> Sunday services comprised the general

<sup>24</sup> *A fourme of prayer, necessarie for the present time and state* (London, 1590: RSTC 16522).

<sup>25</sup> *An homelie against disobedience and uylful rebellion* (London, 1570: RSTC 13679.2), sigs. Ci<sup>v</sup>-Cii<sup>r</sup>, Kii<sup>v</sup>-[Kiii]<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>26</sup> *An order of praier and thankes-giving, for the preseruacion of the queenes maiesties life and salfetie* (London, 1585: RSTC 16516).

<sup>27</sup> Only the text of the opening of the preface of the liturgy for 1560 (*A short form and order to be used in Common prayer thryse a Weeke, for seasonable wether, and good successe of the com[m]on affayres of the Realme* (London, 1560; not RSTC) – see John Strype, *The Life and Acts of Matthew Parker, the First Archbishop of Canterbury, in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth* (3 vols, Oxford, 1821), I, p. 179) is extant but, because it is the same as that for *A fourme to be used in common prayer twice a weeke* (London, 1563: RSTC 16505) and the liturgical format remained the same throughout Elizabeth's reign, it is likely that the two texts were broadly similar or the same.

<sup>28</sup> Liturgies were commissioned for 13 occasions between 1560 and 1642 (see Table 2.1 (L1)).



confession, the residue of the service for morning prayer from the BCP with different lessons and psalms; the latter were 'composite psalms' composed from verses scattered across the Old Testament. This was followed by the litany and new special prayers. Wednesday services comprised the service for morning prayer from the BCP, followed by an exhortation for private prayer (usually a homily), 15 minutes of silent private prayers and meditations, then the litany and the new prayers, concluding with the communion. If there was no communion, the Ten Commandments, epistle and gospel were read, followed by a sermon or homily. The service ended with the prayer for the state of the whole church and the prayers, 'Almighty God the fountain of all wisdom' and 'Almighty God which hast promised'. Wednesdays were also designated as fast days during which everyone between the ages of 16 and 60 (excluding the sick and, during harvest time, labourers) were required to follow the 'Order of the fast' which was included in the special form of prayer. This order instructed people to eat 'one only competent and moderate meale ... without varietie of kyndes of meate, dyshes, spyces, confections, or wyne, but only such as may serue for necessitie, comlynesse, and health'. Friday services were short, comprising only morning prayer, the litany and the special prayers.<sup>29</sup> The second format, established in 1564 for the thanksgiving for the end of the plague, made fewer changes to the BCP.<sup>30</sup> In these services, some of the prescribed psalms, prayers, collects and biblical readings were substituted for specially written ones more closely attuned to the cause in hand. The new psalms were 'composite' ones. New prayers, psalms and collects could also be added at different points in the BCP service. For instance, the thanksgiving service for the relief of Malta in 1565 prescribed a 'composite psalm' and a new collect to be read at the end of the litany.<sup>31</sup>

The Elizabethan formats of services and many of the prayers, collects and 'composite psalms' (as well as the prefaces and instructions) continued to be used in England and Wales during the reigns of James I and Charles I; the 'order for the fast' was also re-issued, with only minor changes, for all fast days. However, there was a further development during Charles's reign. In the summer of 1626, for the fast during plague and war, separate services for morning and evening prayer were provided for the first time, as well as a communion service; this format was copied for all subsequent occasions for which full liturgies were ordered until 1641. Both special services of morning and evening prayer copied the order for morning prayer and the litany in the BCP, except that the Venite was replaced by a

<sup>29</sup> *A fourme to be used in common prayer* (RSTC 16505), sigs. Aii<sup>r</sup>–Aiii<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>30</sup> This format was used in 11 cases between 1564 and 1642 (see Table 2.1 (L2)).

<sup>31</sup> *A short forme of thankesgeuing to God for the delyuerie of the Isle of Malta* (London, 1565: RSTC 16509).



'composite' psalm, specific psalms and readings were ordered, new collects were provided and a new collect or prayer was ordered to be inserted in the litany before the prayer for the king. The communion service followed that in the BCP but provided a choice of two new collects to be said instead of the collect for the day and a total of six prayers (including the collects for the third Sunday after Epiphany, the third Sunday before Lent, and the first, second and sixth collects after the offertory from the communion service, all from the BCP) to be said after the prayer for the whole state of the church.<sup>32</sup>

The provision of official forms of prayer – whether individual prayers or whole liturgies – came to a sudden end in September 1641. Reflecting the growing hostility of godly MPs towards the BCP, and to set forms of prayer generally, no official form of prayer or liturgy was issued for the thanksgiving for the peace between England and Scotland, which was ordered for observance in all parishes on Tuesday 7 September by parliamentary ordinance.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, the House of Commons ordered that John Williams, bishop of Lincoln and dean of Westminster, be prohibited from using *A forme of thanksgiving* which he had written and had printed for use in his jurisdictions.<sup>34</sup> After this episode, no further forms of prayer were issued until after the outbreak of the Civil War, when the royalists issued forms (which followed the liturgical formats established under Elizabeth) to be used during the thanksgiving for their victories at the battles of Edgehill (1642), Newbury (1643), Newark (1644) and Hereford (1645), the fast for the success of the treaty negotiations at Uxbridge (1645) and, from October 1643, for a monthly general fast for God's protection for the king.<sup>35</sup> Though parliament issued its own orders for nationwide special worship, it did not issue forms for parish use but instead commissioned and distributed (lengthy) accounts of military victories, successes which

<sup>32</sup> *A forme of prayer, necessary to bee used in these dangerous times* (London, 1626: RSTC 16543). For other occasions which used this format see Table 8.1 (L3).

<sup>33</sup> Organization of a thanksgiving was part of the peace treaty; it was probably ordered by parliamentary ordinance because Charles was in Scotland at the time. *Proceedings in the Opening Session of the Long Parliament: House of Commons* (7 vols, Rochester, NY, 2000–2007) I, pp. 17, 20–1, 29, 39, 45–6, 55–8, 64–9, 97, 100, 155, 161; III, 604–8; VI, 272, 370, 378, 387, 565–6, 570–3, 577, 591–2, 596, 607, 608, 612, 623, 626, 648–9. For the role of parliament in ordering nationwide special worship, see Natalie Mears and Stephen Taylor, 'The monarchy, parliament and fasting in seventeenth-century England' (in preparation).

<sup>34</sup> *A forme of thanksgiving, to be used the seventh of September thorowout the diocese of Lincoln, and in the jurisdiction of Westminster* (s.n., 1641: Wing C4181A) [attributed to John Williams on BL, Thomason E171[12]]; *Proceedings ... of the Long Parliament*, VI, pp. 649, 658, 675, 685, 691, 702–5.

<sup>35</sup> *A prayer of thanks giving for his majesties late victory over the rebelss* ([Oxford], 1641: Wing P3193); *A forme of common-prayer* (Oxford, 1645: Wing C4112); *A forme of common-prayer* (Oxford, 1643: Wing C4111).



were attributed to divine favour, to be read during church services. It was not until after the Restoration in 1660 that the formats of special services set under Elizabeth a hundred years earlier – as well as some of the actual texts – were revived and reused for special worship in all parishes.<sup>36</sup>

The format of the Irish services before the Civil War is unknown. Orders survive for only two occasions (1625-Ir and 1642-Ir), and neither of these specify the format that services were to take, or issued official prayers or liturgies. There are also no extant forms of prayers or liturgies for Ireland, and the paucity of Irish churchwardens' accounts mean that it is impossible to establish whether any were issued but no longer survive. It is likely that official forms were not commissioned for Ireland and that ministers were instead expected to write their own prayers. In 1625, archbishops and bishops were expressly ordered to write and distribute their own prayers for parish use because 'that some of the Cleargie cannot preach, nor make such forme of zealous prayer as the time requireth'.<sup>37</sup> Irish services also appear to have differed from English and Welsh ones in three other ways. First, they were primarily fasts, rather than once-, twice- or thrice-weekly church services with a weekly fast. Second, fasts were usually held on Fridays not Wednesdays. Third, even if ministers had based their services on those in the BCP, they would still have differed from those in England and Wales because the BCP first authorized for use in Ireland (in 1560) was a Latin version, not the English Elizabethan one. An Irish translation of the BCP was not printed until 1608.<sup>38</sup>

What was the scale of successive regimes' deviation from authorized services, whether they were the Sarum Rite, Cranmer's revised litany or the BCP? Services for only two out of the twelve English and Welsh occasions deviated from the Sarum or other local use when it was the official liturgy (1541-E2 and 1544-E2), and only two services out of four deviated from the revised litany after it was authorized for general use in 1545 (1545-E2 and 1548-E), though for one of these occasions (1548-E) the nature of the deviation was only to add an extra prayer to the litany.<sup>39</sup> However,

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<sup>36</sup> For example *A form of prayer, to be used upon the twelfth of June* (London, 1661: Wing C4143) and *A form of prayer, to be used upon the fifteenth of January* (London, 1662: Wing C4142).

<sup>37</sup> Proclamation by the lord deputy and council, 13 October 1625, RSTC 14202, SoA, Proclamations Ireland, fo. 42r.

<sup>38</sup> Felicity Heal, *Reformation in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford, 2003), p. 381; *Leabhar na nurnaightheadh gcomhchoidchiond agus mheinisdraldachda na Sacrameinteadh, maille le gnathaighthibh agus le hordaighthibh oile, do réir eagalse na Sagsan* ([Dublin], 1608: RSTC 16433).

<sup>39</sup> It should be noted that this figure may not be accurate because it is unclear whether the revised litany was used for thanksgivings as well as the petitionary services for which Cranmer had designed it. MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, p. 330.



from 1552, the services for only two occasions in England and Wales conformed to the BCP service (1586-E3 and 1596-E3). For the remaining 65 English and Welsh occasions, as well as the English, Welsh and Scottish occasion and 6 Irish occasions, special prayers and liturgies or prayers were commissioned by the crown or, in the case of Ireland, composed by individual bishops or ministers. (Eight occasions were celebrated in Mary's reign and lie outside the scope of this essay.)<sup>40</sup>

The decision to commission prayers or liturgies for special worship required considerable time, effort and money to produce and distribute texts to all parishes across the kingdoms (more than 9,000 in England and Wales alone). Special prayers and liturgies were usually written by the bishops.<sup>41</sup> For instance, John Aylmer wrote the liturgy used after the earthquake in 1580.<sup>42</sup> William Laud composed the prayers for the success of the English fleet (1628-E2) after George Abbott, archbishop of Canterbury, had failed to do so.<sup>43</sup> Prayers and liturgies were sometimes subject to the approval of the privy council (or, in Elizabeth's reign, William Cecil, Lord Burghley). Burghley edited the liturgy composed during the plague in 1563 (1563-E), the thanksgiving prayers for the failure of the Parry Plot (1585-E1) and the petitionary prayers for the success of the army and navy in 1596 (1596-E1).<sup>44</sup> Archbishop John Whitgift edited those for the English forces in 1597 (1597-E).<sup>45</sup> The bishops did attempt to economize their efforts by recycling prefaces, prayers and 'composite psalms' from one occasion to another. The liturgy devised for use during the outbreak of plague (1563-E1) was reused with only minor changes in

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<sup>40</sup> Special worship in Mary's reign was conducted according to the Sarum or other local rite, though additional prayers seem to have been added to petitionary services for the queen's safe delivery in childbirth. The exception is 1553-E2, which should have been conducted initially according to the BCP which remained in force until 19 December. Between 20 and 30 December, the revised litany was the authorized liturgy and it was only after this that the Sarum or other uses could be adopted legally. Because of the complexities of this occasion, it has been included in the statistics for Mary's reign.

<sup>41</sup> The exceptions to this are *A fourme to be used in common prayer twice a weeke* (RSTC 16505) co-written by Edmund Grindal, bishop of London, and Alexander Nowell, dean of St Paul's (see BL, Lansdowne MS 6, fos 156r–157r) and *Certaine prayers ... for ... her maiesties forces and nauy* (London, 1597: RSTC 16528) which may have been written by a member of Archbishop Whitgift's household (see LPL, LPL MS 113, fos 1r–19v).

<sup>42</sup> John Aylmer to Lord Burghley, 22 April 1580, BL, Lansdowne MS 30, fo. 145r.

<sup>43</sup> Secretary Conway to Bishop William Laud of London, 22 August 1628, PRO: TNA, SP16/113/52, fo. 93r.

<sup>44</sup> 'Thankes giving to god for withdrawing and ceasing the plage', 1563, BL, Lansdowne MS 116, fo. 73r; 'A prayer of Thankesgivinge for the deliuerance of her maiestie from the murderous intentions of Dr Parry', 1585, BL, Lansdowne MS 116, fos 77r–79r; 'Forme of a prayer for the Queene', 1596, BL, Lansdowne MS 116, fos 81r–82r.

<sup>45</sup> LPL, LPL MS 113. fos 1r–19v.



all subsequent outbreaks of plague, except during the winters of 1586-87 and 1596-97. Both the petitionary prayers and thanksgivings services for the safe delivery in childbirth of Anna of Denmark (three occasions) or Henrietta Maria (eleven) were recycled on each subsequent occasion. The liturgy written for petitionary services during the threat of a Spanish invasion in 1588 comprised an edited version of the preface from the liturgy for plague (1563-E1) and the prayers written for the service after the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre (1572-E).<sup>46</sup>

Once the prayers or liturgies had been composed and approved, they were printed by the royal printers and distributed to parishes. Evidence suggests that the Elizabethan and early Stuart regimes managed this process quickly. The liturgy for use during the outbreak of plague in 1563 was written sometime between 23 and 30 July. It was approved by Burghley, printed within a couple of days and, if it can be assumed that the churchwardens of St Mary Woolchurch, London, kept accurate accounts, bought by the parish on 3 August.<sup>47</sup> The neighbouring parish of St Mary Woolnoth purchased the liturgy ordered in response to the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre two days after it had been printed.<sup>48</sup> In 1605, the archdeacon of St Albans was told that prayers for Queen Anna's safe delivery were being printed that day and would be available for distribution at six o'clock the following morning.<sup>49</sup> Recycling existing prayers and liturgies meant forms could be produced and distributed quickly. John Aylmer objected to Burghley's suggestion that a new liturgy be written after the earthquake in 1580 because it 'would aske a longe tyme' and 'the people is presentlie much moved with the present warninge, and are of such nature, as commonlie they make it but a ix dayes wondre ... [and] Therefore it were necessarie that it were done out of hand'. He suggested that the existing text that he had written for the diocese of London be used for the whole realm instead.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Preface: compare *A fourme of prayer, necessary for the present time and state* (London, 1588: RSTC 16519), sigs. Aii<sup>v</sup>-Aiii<sup>v</sup> to *A fourme to be used in common prayer* (RSTC 16505), sigs. Aii<sup>r</sup>-Aii<sup>v</sup>. For prayers compare *A fourme of prayer* (RSTC 16519), sigs. Bi<sup>r</sup>-Biii<sup>v</sup>, Ci<sup>r</sup>-Cii<sup>v</sup> to *A fourme of common prayer to be used ... and necessarie for the present tyme and state* (London, 1572: RSTC 16511), sigs. Aiii<sup>v</sup>-Ci<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>47</sup> St Mary Woolchurch, Churchwardens' accounts, GL, Guildhall MS 1013/1, fo. 5v; BL, Lansdowne MS 6, fo. 160r. On the accuracy of churchwardens' accounts, see Andrew Foster, 'Churchwardens' accounts of early modern England and Wales: some problems to note, but much to be gained,' in *The Parish in English Life, 1400-1600*, ed. Katherine L. French, Gary M. Gibbs and Beat A. Kumin (Manchester and New York, 1997), p. 85.

<sup>48</sup> St Mary Woolnoth, churchwardens' accounts, GL, Guildhall MS 1002/1a, fos 111r, 169r. The title page is dated 27 October 1572, two months after the first massacre.

<sup>49</sup> Kitching, "Prayers fit for the time", p. 247.

<sup>50</sup> BL, Lansdowne MS 30. fo. 145r.



Prayers and liturgies were usually distributed by episcopal networks of bishops and archdeacons or by the church courts' networks of apparitors and sumners. In 1563, the churchwardens of St Mary Woolnoth, London, paid the sumner two pence for *A fourme to be used in common prayer*.<sup>51</sup> In 1568, the churchwardens of Leverton, Lincolnshire, paid 16 pence 'to the paritor for delyuering us the booke of prayers agaynst the Turke and for the book.'<sup>52</sup> Surveying churchwardens' accounts from across England, it appears that these networks were relatively efficient at achieving widespread, if not comprehensive, distribution of forms. This did not, however, stop godly MPs complaining about the failure of bishops and their officers to distribute books in a timely fashion, and at a reasonable price, during the outbreak of plague in 1625. Thomas Dove, bishop of Peterborough, came in for particular criticism.<sup>53</sup>

## II

Why did successive regimes invest so much time, effort and money in providing new prayers and liturgies for special worship? Before 1552, there was largely no alternative: there was no reformed liturgy suitable for petitionary special worship until 1544, and Cranmer's revised litany was not authorized for general use until the following year. It is unclear whether this litany was suitable for use in thanksgivings. After 1552, the 'occasional prayers' for times of war, famine, dearth, plague and bad weather in the BCP could only be used in approximately a third of all Elizabethan and early Stuart occasions. Moreover, the range of events or problems for which special worship was ordered expanded, and increasingly included events for which the BCP had not made provision: the discovery of Catholic plots to assassinate the queen and the massacres of Protestants abroad.

However, it seems likely that the Elizabethan and early Stuart regimes continued to commission special prayers and liturgies, even for occasions for which there were appropriate prayers in the BCP, because of beliefs in the way that providence and prayer worked. Domestic and foreign problems and crises – war, famine, plague, bad weather and dearth – were regarded as acts of divine providence. They were, in the words of the form of prayer commissioned during the outbreak of plague in 1563,

<sup>51</sup> St Mary Woolnoth, churchwardens' accounts, GL, Guildhall MS 1002/1a, fo. 110r.

<sup>52</sup> Edward Peacock, 'Extracts from the churchwardens' accounts of the parish of Leverton, in the county of Lincoln,' *Archaeologia*, 41 (1867), p. 364. This entry may be misdated because prayers against Ottoman invasions were only ordered in 1565 and 1566.

<sup>53</sup> *Journals of the House of Commons* [hereafter C/], I, p. 810.



the ‘particuler punishmentes, afflictions, and perils ... to shew his [God’s] wrath agaynst sinne, and to call his people to repentaunce, and to the redresse of their lyues’.<sup>54</sup> Conversely, military victories and the birth of royal heirs were signs of divine favour; rewards for the realm’s collective godliness. To alleviate God’s anger, the realm had to recognize and confess its collective sins and reform its collective behaviour. To offer thanks, the realm needed to show its gratitude appropriately.<sup>55</sup> As learned treatises, devotional guides, popular catechisms and the Books of Homilies argued, both of these required prayer.<sup>56</sup> One of the main purposes of prayer was to seek divine assistance ‘for vrgent and right necessary causes’ and, as a host of Old Testament examples demonstrated, these included nationwide crises such as war, drought and plague as well as successes, such as military victory.<sup>57</sup> And, because these crises and victories were signs of collective sinfulness or godliness, such prayers had to be public and collective. As John Smith, minister of St Lawrence, Reading, made clear in *The doctrine of praier in generall for Allmen* (1595), ‘praier intreating the Lord for

<sup>54</sup> *A fourme to be used in common prayer* (RSTC 16505), sig. Aii<sup>r</sup>. See also *A necessarie and godly prayer appointed by the right reuerend father in God Iohn, bishop of London ... for the turning away of Gods wrath* ([London], 1585: RSTC 16515), sig. Ai<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>55</sup> John Bradford, *A godlye treatise of prayer, translated into Englyshe by Iohn Bradforde* (London, [1553]: RSTC 17791), sigs. Cv<sup>r</sup>–Cvi<sup>r</sup>, Hvii<sup>r</sup>; Richard Whitforde, *The pomander of prayer* (London, [1530]: RSTC 25421.3), sig. Gi<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>56</sup> *Certayne sermons or Homelies appoynted by the Kynges Maiestie, to bee declared and redde, by all persons, vicares, or curates, euery Sondaye in their churches, where they haue cure* ([London], 1547: RSTC 13639.5), sigs. Aii<sup>r</sup>–Aiii<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>57</sup> Bradford, *Godlye treatise*, sigs. Ciii<sup>r</sup>–Cv<sup>r</sup>, Fii<sup>r</sup>; Whitforde, *Pomander of prayer*, sigs. Aiii<sup>r</sup>–Aiv<sup>r</sup>, Aii<sup>r</sup>, Fiv<sup>r</sup>–Fiv<sup>r</sup>, Gi<sup>r</sup>–Gi<sup>r</sup>; Thomas Becon, *A new pathway vnto praier ful of much godly frute and christen knowledge, lately made by Theodore Basille* (London, 1542: RSTC 1734), sigs. Eiv<sup>r</sup>–Evi<sup>r</sup>, Eviii<sup>r</sup>–Fi<sup>r</sup>, Fii<sup>r</sup>, Mvi<sup>r</sup>–Mvi<sup>r</sup>, Niv<sup>r</sup>–Nv<sup>r</sup>; John Smith, *The doctrine of praier in generall for Allmen, that, is, vniuersally for All mankind* (London, 1595: RSTC 22797), pp. 10–19; Anthony Marten, *The common places of the most famous and renourmed diuine Doctor Peter Martyr diuided into foure principall parts ... Translated and partlie gathered by Anthonie Marten ...* (London, [1583]: RSTC 24669), pp. 226, 247, 300; Richard Leake, *Foure sermons preached and publikely taught by Richard Leake, preacher of the word of God at Killington, within the baronrie of Kendall, and countie of Westmerland: immediately after the great visitation of the pestilence in the fore-sayd countie* (London, 1599: RSTC 15342), p. 30; Alexander Nowell, *A catechisme, for first instruction and learning of Christian religion. Translated out of Latine into English* (London, 1570: RSTC 18708), fos 61v–63v; *The seconde tome of homelyes, of such matters as were promised and intituled in the former part of homelyes, set out by the auctoritie of the Queenes Maiestie: and to be read in euery paryshe churche agreablye* (London, 1563: RSTC 13663), sigs. Llii<sup>r</sup>–Llii<sup>r</sup>, Lliiv<sup>r</sup>–Lliiv<sup>r</sup>, HHhiv<sup>r</sup>–HHhiv<sup>r</sup>, llii<sup>r</sup>–llii<sup>r</sup>, Kkii<sup>r</sup> [note that this is a misprinting; the homily – on common prayer – follows that on prayer.].



deliuerance ... [and] giuing of thankes, for the Lords great kindnesse shewed' should be 'publike praier ... made in church and congregation'.<sup>58</sup>

Prayer enabled men and women either to confess their sins and petition God for mercy, or to offer their thanks. But it was also widely recognized that men and women often needed further help to recognize and confess their sins and that God welcomed contrite behaviour. Therefore, fasting and alms-giving were believed to be valuable accompaniments to petitionary prayers. They were, in St John Chrysostom's words, 'an helpe to prayer' or, as Richard Whitforde argued, the 'wings of prayer'.<sup>59</sup> Fasting humbled the flesh, made the heart contrite and brought man's prayers to the attention of God: 'Thus se we', Thomas Becon argued, 'how necessary a thinge it is to ioyne fasting wt prayer.'<sup>60</sup> Alms-giving made 'pleasaunt the humble supplicacion of a sinner in the eyes of the diuine maiesty'.<sup>61</sup>

Special liturgies provided a more extensive and more structured programme of activities than the occasional prayers in the BCP to help early modern men and women to recognize and confess their sins or to offer God thanks. Prayers, 'composite psalms' and readings were composed or selected for the specific occasion. Appropriate Homilies were chosen to encourage parishioners to contemplate particular issues. During the outbreak of plague in 1563, for instance, ministers were ordered to read the Homilies on fasting, prayer, alms-giving, turning away from God, death, repentance, and the punishment of impenitent sinners; these all reminded congregations of the dangers of sin, the importance of repentance and how to repent.<sup>62</sup> Ministers who were licensed to preach were instructed to use the prefaces of the forms of prayers together with or as an alternative to accompanying reports, which described why nationwide prayers had been ordered, as the basis for their sermons.<sup>63</sup> Periods of private prayer and meditation offered parishioners an opportunity for silent prayer and reflection.<sup>64</sup> Special liturgies also encouraged men and women to continue inward reflection and confession at home by recommending household prayers, study of the scriptures, fasting and alms-giving which all humbled the body and spirit and prepared the individual for repentance. Indeed,

<sup>58</sup> I[ohn] Smith, *The doctrine of Praier in generall for Allmen, that is, vniuersally for All mankind* (London, 1595: RSTC 22797), p. 8.

<sup>59</sup> Becon, *Pathway vnto praier*, sig. Lvii<sup>r</sup>; Whitforde, *Pomander of prayer*, sigs. Gii<sup>r</sup>–Giii<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>60</sup> Becon, *Pathway vnto praier*, sig. Lvii<sup>r</sup>. See also *Seconde tome of homelyes*, sig. CCCiv<sup>r</sup> [note this is misprinted and is the second CCCiv in this gathering].

<sup>61</sup> Becon, *Pathway vnto praier*, sigs. Lviii<sup>r</sup>–Miii<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., sigs. Aiii<sup>r</sup>–Aiv<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>63</sup> *A fourme to be used in common prayer twise a weeke* (RSTC 16505), sig. Aiii<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., sig. Aiii<sup>r</sup>.



prayers for household use, *A forme of meditation*, were issued during the outbreak of plague in 1563, as well as the special liturgy for parish use.<sup>65</sup> Special prayers did not provide such extensive help to parishioners, but they were longer and more specific than the occasional prayers in the BCP. Moreover, the Elizabethan regime tried to prevent the regular repetition of prayers – daily or several times a week – from becoming mechanical by providing a series of prayers rather than the single prayers in the BCP.<sup>66</sup>

That special prayers and liturgies provided more effectively for special worship than the ‘occasional prayers’ in the BCP may also explain why prayers were not included in the BCP for events which had prompted special worship since the thirteenth century and continued to do so in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: the health of the monarch, the safe delivery of queen consorts in childbirth, domestic rebellion and support for Christian princes fighting abroad in wars in which England was not directly involved. These made up a large proportion of occasions between 1552 and 1641: special worship was ordered on seven occasions during Elizabeth’s reign in support of the French Huguenots and of Christians under attack by the Ottomans, while prayers and thanksgivings for the safe delivery of queen consorts accounted for 14 of the 32 English and Welsh occasions between 1603 and 1642. It is hard to find an alternative explanation. Some events, such as pregnancies of queen consorts and the support of Christian princes fighting abroad, were not rare occasions. Neither were other events necessarily too sensitive for ‘occasional prayers’ to be included in the BCP. For instance, the first Book of Homilies (1547) raised the spectre of domestic rebellion by including Homilies on good order and obedience to rulers and magistrates; the second Book of Homilies (1571) incorporated *An homelie against disobedience and wryful rebellion* which had first been commissioned for use during special worship after the Northern Rising (1569–70).

What, then, was the purpose of the ‘occasional prayers’ in the BCP? Were they just a liturgical cul-de-sac, devised by Cranmer in 1552 but forgotten by Parker and Grindal in the early 1560s, only to be remembered, briefly, in the winters of 1586–87 and 1596–97? It seems likely that a distinction was made between prayers for the whole kingdom, and prayers for more particular areas. Probably, ‘occasional prayers’ were used primarily on a local or diocesan basis, though this is impossible to trace in churchwardens’ accounts because, unlike special prayers and liturgies,

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<sup>65</sup> *A forme of meditation, very meete to be daylye used of house holders in this daungerous, and contagious tyme* (London, [1563?]: RSTC 16504.5).

<sup>66</sup> The Elizabethan BCP provided two prayers for times of famine and dearth; the Jacobean and Caroline BCPs contained one of these prayers but two thanksgiving prayers for deliverance from plague.



their use required no financial outlay. Bishops were permitted to order special worship within their own dioceses and, throughout the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, there were regional and local outbreaks of plague, instances of unseasonable weather and periods of famine and dearth which prompted them to do so. Though they were authorized to compose their own forms of prayer for these occasions, the occasional prayers in the BCP provided them with ready and approved texts.<sup>67</sup>

### III

Did special worship have an effect upon daily public worship? This is a difficult question to answer because very few descriptions of special services are extant, especially for the period after 1552. It is also impossible to calculate precisely how many days of special worship there were in parishes during this period and thus how many times parishioners would have experienced services that were different from the normal authorized service. As Table 2.1 demonstrates, it is not known how many times a week and for how many weeks 48 English and Welsh occasions and three Irish ones were observed. In a further 20 and 2 cases respectively, the *terminus ad quem* can only be estimated either by the ordering of a subsequent thanksgiving or by, for instance, the known decline of deaths by plague in London.<sup>68</sup> A number of occasions were also ordered to be observed on 'holy days' which varied across the realm. It was not until 1625 that special worship was ordered to begin on a specific date; before this, parishes were ordered to begin observing special worship on the first appropriate day (for example Sunday) after their churchwardens received a form of prayer.<sup>69</sup> For some occasions, prayers were ordered to be said more regularly in urban parishes than in rural ones.<sup>70</sup> Therefore, the number of days of special worship can only be estimated. In England and Wales, nationwide special worship was ordered on average once every 18 months during Elizabeth's reign, once every 3 years under James and once

<sup>67</sup> For example *A prayer to be sayd ... (through the dioeces of Norwich) during the tyme of this hard and sharp wether* ([Norwich, 1571?]; RSTC 16510.5).

<sup>68</sup> The ordering of special worship during outbreaks of plague was governed by when the disease struck London (see comments in Leake, *Foure sermons*, p. 83). Petitionary prayers usually ceased with the weekly death rate dropped to below a specified minimum.

<sup>69</sup> *By the King. A proclamation for a publike, generall, and solemne fast* (London, 1625; RSTC 8787).

<sup>70</sup> *A fourme of common prayer to be used* (RSTC 16511), sig. Aii<sup>r</sup>. This pattern was also used in seventeenth-century Scotland, for example Archbishop John Spottiswoode of St Andrews to Bishop Patrick Forbes of Aberdeen, 13 July 1625, National Archives of Scotland. GD188/20/9/5



every 7 months under Charles. And a highly conservative estimate suggests that an average of 10 days a year may have been spent in special worship.

However, it is possible to establish the extent of the liturgical difference between daily and special worship and how different the two forms of public worship were. Perhaps surprisingly, the difference was greater and more noticeable before 1552 when fewer services deviated from the authorized liturgy. This was because, in 1544 and 1551, the new special liturgies were significantly different from the authorized services. Though Cranmer's revised litany in 1544 drew heavily on the Sarum Rite, it was different in structure, was in the vernacular and changed parishioners' relationship to the sacred space of the church and its environs by requiring the litany to be sung wholly within the church, rather than allowing processions around the church or to other churches. *A thankes geuing to God* (1551) also differed structurally and in content from the BCP service, even though it used parts of the authorized service for morning prayer. Conversely, after 1552, both formats of special liturgies followed the structure of the BCP to different degrees, while special prayers were inserted into the existing daily BCP service. What parishioners may have noticed more was how special worship disrupted the pattern of biblical readings, psalms and Homilies prescribed by the BCP and the Book of Homilies by requiring specific readings and Homilies to be used, by providing 'composite psalms' to be said or sung and by selecting other psalms to be said or sung at the end of services.

One response to the changes before 1552 is revealed by the dispute in Milton, Kent in 1545 when the sexton, one of the churchwardens (John Lacey) and some of the congregation objected to their minister, John Byng, singing Cranmer's revised litany within the church.<sup>71</sup> The sexton took the parish's processional cross out of the church before the litany to process around the churchyard, taking some of the parishioners – and most of the choir – with him. Though Byng 'divers tymes ... sheweid them of the parishe that yt were better to singe the saide procession in the churche than oute of yt', he was left 'w' owte eny to anser him, saue ij of the parishe the which do not commonly singe and if thei had not ben, he had songe alone'.<sup>72</sup> The depositions suggest that social pressure may have been put on parishioners, as well as on Lacey. One witness testified that 'the clarke, and some other wolde haue tarieid w' the priste to haue helped him to

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<sup>71</sup> This appears to have occurred during an ordinary service but serves to show the impact the new litany had on some parishes. The precise date of the conflict is not known and it may have been before the litany was officially authorized for general use; Cranmer is known to have ordered its use within his jurisdiction prior in the summer. MacCulloch, *Cranmer*, p. 332. I would like to thank Alec Ryrie for this reference and for discussing it with me.

<sup>72</sup> Depositions on the English litany, [1545], TNA: PRO, SP1/203, fos 85r–90r. For Byng, see The Clergymen of the Church of England Database, Person ID: 39278, <http://www.theclergydatabase.org.uk/jsp/search/index.jsp>.



sing the saide procession [in the church]' but Lacey pulled them away 'by the commaundment of John fynche', a local gentleman whose family held much of the land in this and surrounding parishes.<sup>73</sup>

In contrast, there is no evidence that the disruption to the pattern of biblical readings, psalms and Homilies after 1552 provoked popular outcry. Instead, there appears to have been an increase in independent and unofficial special worship: moments at which some parishes chose to add to or deviate from the prescribed daily service. The most obvious, and well known, of these occasions was Elizabeth's Accession Day, which was marked by some parishes from at least 1564 and became more common in the aftermath of the Northern Rising (1569–70) and the failure of the Spanish Armada (1588).<sup>74</sup> This was not an official holiday (with release from work) and the form of prayer written by Grindal for it in 1576 – which copied the structure of the Sunday petitionary service issued in 1563 and the thanksgiving service commissioned for the end of the plague in 1564 – does not appear to have been commissioned by the regime

<sup>73</sup> TNA: PRO, SP1/203, fo. 87r.

<sup>74</sup> St Peter Westcheap, churchwardens' accounts, GL MS 645/1, fo. 72v; St Botolph Aldersgate, churchwardens' accounts, GL MS 1454/6 (This is a roll which is damaged and the date lost but it appears to be for the period 25 March 1564 – 25 March 1565 (New Style) and was submitted on 17 June 1565.) For increases between 1569 and 1572 see, for example: GL, Guildhall MS 3556/1, fo. 17v (St Mary Aldermanbury, London); GL, Guildhall MS 4241/1, p. 4 (St Ethelburg Bishopsgate, London); Alford James Waterlow (ed.), *The Accounts of the Churchwardens of the Parish of St Michael, Cornhill in the City of London, from 1456 to 1608* (n.p., 1883), p. 165; GL, Guildhall MS 4956/2, fo. 106v (All Hallows Staining, London); GL, Guildhall MS 6836, fo. 18v (St Helen Bishopsgate, London); John Amphlett, *The Churchwardens' Accounts of St Michael's in Bedwardine, Worcester, from 1539 to 1603* (Worcestershire Historical Society; Oxford, 1896), p. 67; H.J. Fowler Swayne, 'Churchwardens' accounts for S. Edmund and S. Thomas, Sarum, 1443–1702', *Wiltshire Record Society* (Salisbury, 1896), pp. 118, 284; Alison Hanham, *Churchwardens' Accounts of Ashburton, 1479–1580* (Devon and Cornwall Record Society, new series, 15; Torquay, 1970), p. 167; J.F. Williams, ed., *The Early Churchwardens' Accounts of Hampshire* (Winchester and London, 1913), p. 216; Thomas Wright, *Churchwardens' Accounts of the Town of Ludlow, in Shropshire, from 1540 to the End of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth* (Camden Society, old series, 102; [Westminster], 1869), p. 153; H.B. Walters, 'The churchwardens' accounts of the parish of Worfield. Part V: 1549–1572', *Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological & Natural History Society*, third series, 9 (1909), p. 66; Anthony Palmer, *Tudor Churchwardens' Accounts* (Hertfordshire Record Society, 1; [Ware], 1985), p. 91; C.B. Pearson, 'Churchwardens' accounts of St Michael's, Bath, 1349–1575' (*Somersetshire Archaeological & Natural History Society Proceedings*, 26; 1880), p. 131; Francis Mardon Osborne (ed.), *The Churchwardens' Accounts of St Michael's Church, Chagford, 1480–1600* (Chagford, 1979), p. 224. For increases after 1588 see, for instance, *Churchwardens' Accounts of Pitlington and Other Parishes in the Diocese of Durham, 1580–1700* (Surtees Society, 84; Durham, 1888), pp. 27, 120; E.R.C. Brinkworth, 'South Newington churchwardens' accounts, 1553–1684', *Banbury Historical Society*, 6 (1964), p. 27.



itself.<sup>75</sup> Its celebration seems to have established a tradition of marking the accessions, as well as coronations and birthdays, of subsequent monarchs; in some parishes, Elizabeth's Accession Day continued to be marked, or celebrations were revived after 1603.<sup>76</sup> The annual celebration of Elizabeth's Accession Day also seems to have set a precedent for anniversary special worship, leading to the establishment of official anniversaries: to mark James's delivery from the Gowrie conspiracy, the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot, and, in Ireland, the failure of the plot to seize Dublin Castle and the arrest of two of the leaders of the Irish Rebellion, Lord Conor Maguire and Hugh MacMahon (1641).<sup>77</sup>

In addition to these anniversary occasions, parishes marked an increasing range of local and national events. In c.1571, Bishop John Parkhurst of Norwich ordered prayers to be said in his diocese in response to bad weather.<sup>78</sup> In the winter of 1599–1600, several London parishes were reported to have recited prayers for the recovery of the earl of Essex from illness.<sup>79</sup> The defeat of the Ottomans at Lepanto in 1572 was celebrated, in London, at All Hallows London Wall, St Mary Aldermanbury, St Michael Cornhill and St Michael le Querne, as well as at Lambeth, Surrey.<sup>80</sup> Churchwardens at St Antholin, St Botolph Aldgate, St Christopher le Stocks, St Mary Woolchurch, St Peters Westcheap in London, as well as St Thomas, Salisbury, all paid for the bells to be rung to

<sup>75</sup> *A fourme of Prayer, with thankes geuyng, to be used euery yeere, the 17. of Nouember, beyng the day of the Queenes Maesties entrie to her raigne* (London, 1576: RSTC 16479).

<sup>76</sup> Anne Barton, 'Harking back to Elizabeth: Ben Jonson and Caroline nostalgia', *English Literary Renaissance*, 48 (1981), pp. 706–31; Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells*, chs 4, 8; Curtis Perry, 'The citizen politics of nostalgia: Queen Elizabeth in early Jacobean London', *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 23 (1993), pp. 89–111; John Watkins, '"Old Bess in the Ruff": remembering Elizabeth I, 1625–1660', *English Literary Renaissance*, 30 (2000), pp. 95–116 and *Representing Elizabeth in Stuart England: Literature, history, sovereignty* (Cambridge, 2002).

<sup>77</sup> English privy council to Archbishop John Whitgift, 12 July 1603, LPL, Whitgift Register, III, fos 151r–151v; Act of the English parliament, 1605, 3 Jac. 1 c. 1, *Statutes at large*, III, 37–8; Lords Justices and the council to William Lenthall, 28 October 1642, *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquess of Ormonde Preserved at Kilkenny Castle* (8 vols, London, 1902–20), II, pp. 216–19.

<sup>78</sup> *A prayer to be sayd ... (through the dioeces of Norwich)*.

<sup>79</sup> Statement made by David Roberts, BD, Jan–May 1600, TNA: PRO, SP12/274/1, fo. 1r; Sir Edward Stanhope to John, Baron Stanhope, 29 December 1599, TNA: PRO, SP12/273/59, fos 111r–112r.

<sup>80</sup> All Hallows London Wall, Churchwardens' accounts, GL, Guildhall MS 5090/2, fo. 13r; St Mary Aldermanbury, Churchwardens' accounts, GL, Guildhall MS 3556/1, fo. 17v; *The Accounts of the Churchwardens of the Parish of St Michael, Cornhill in the City of London, from 1456 to 1608*, ed. Alford James Waterlow (n.p., 1883), p. 166; St Michael le Querne, Churchwardens' accounts, GL, Guildhall MS 2895/1 fos 194v, 197r; *Lambeth Churchwardens' Accounts*, p. 111.



mark Mary Stuart's execution.<sup>81</sup> The most intriguing example is suggested by the British Library's copy of the form of prayer issued for use during the Ottoman invasion of Hungary in 1565 in which the words 'Turk' and 'Turkes' have been changed to 'pope' and 'papistes' by hand in the margin. Was this particular copy reused in a parish to pray against Roman Catholics? Unfortunately the provenance of this copy is not known.<sup>82</sup>

As this intriguing form of prayer implies, after 1552, opposition to special worship was not focused primarily on the format of services but on the reasons for which some occasions of special worship were ordered. For instance, in 1562, Giles Fezard, from Donhead St Mary in Wiltshire, complained that the prayer issued in support of the English troops fighting with the French Huguenots at Newhaven was 'vngodly' and 'vncharitable'. He argued that 'the Duke of Guyes is a godly man and no tyrant or cruell person but a favourer and seker of godes glorie / and suche a man as wolde be oure frende' and that 'the Queenes Maiestie that nowe is had gon so farr in suche matters [that is, the Religious Settlement] that nowe she wold torne agene if she wist howe'.<sup>83</sup> David Ramsey, an Essex labourer, allegedly said that he 'was a papyste and that he wolde praye for the pope' during a petitionary service held for English success against the Spanish Armada on 11 August 1588.<sup>84</sup> In Ireland, Archbishop Loftus reported to Burghley that 'notwithstanding the sheriffs of ech county did ther duties with all diligence, and warned all men to repaire to the principall church in euery county, where order was taken for publique prayers and thankesgivinges vnto god' for England's success against the Spanish Armada, 'verie fewe or none almost resorted thervnto but euen in

<sup>81</sup> St Antholin, Churchwardens' accounts, GL, Guildhall MS 1046/1, fo. 31v; St Botolph Aldgate, Churchwardens' accounts, GL, Guildhall MS 9235/1 (part 2), sig. 11v; *Accomptes of the churchwardens of ... St Cristofer's*, p. 17; GL, Guildhall MS 1013/1, fo. 48r; GL, Guildhall MS 645/1, fo. 123r; *Churchwardens' accounts for S. Edmund and S. Thomas, Sarum, 1443-1702*, ed. H.J. Fowle Swayne (Wiltshire Record Society; Salisbury, 1896), p. 296.

<sup>82</sup> *A fourme to be used in common prayer ... for the preservation of those Christians and their Countreys, that are nowe inuaded by the Turke in Hungary or elsewhere* (London, 1565: RSTC 16510). BL Shelfmark C.25.e.13(2); this copy appears on *Early English Books Online*.

<sup>83</sup> Attorney-General vs jury of Wiltshire, 5 Elizabeth [1562-3], TNA: PRO, STAC5/A8/5, fos 1r, 2r, 4r, 5r, 6r; Same vs Edward Bennett, 5 Elizabeth [1562-3], TNA: PRO, STAC5/A10/14. Fezard was probably related to the yeoman, Edward Fezard, patron of Donhead St Mary *pro hac vice* in 1555. Edward awarded the living to another relative, John Fessarde (deprived November 1565), a leading Catholic light in the county. John was one of three men ordered by Cardinal Pole to preach in the diocese of Salisbury. The Clergyman of the Church of England Database [CCED] (*vide* Donhead St Mary, Wiltshire); Mary to Dr [Thomas] Harding, Dr [Thomas] Heskins and John Fessarde, [30 May] 1558, TNA: PRO, SP11/13/15, fo. 25r, Cardinal Pole to same, [30 May] 1558, TNA: PRO, SP11/13/16, fo. 26r.

<sup>84</sup> *Calendar of Assize Records: Essex Indictments, Elizabeth I*, ed. J.S. Cockburr (London, 1978), n. 331.



Dublin it self the lawyers in therne time tooke occasion to leaue the towne, of purpose to absent them selves from that godlie exercise'.<sup>85</sup> Attendance at the service at Youghall was similarly poor.<sup>86</sup> As the Elizabethan regime in particular began to order special worship for events which reflected its own confessional outlook and belief in Catholic conspiracy, the consensus on special worship began to break down.

#### IV

Nationwide prayers, fasts and thanksgivings were not 'strategies of persuasion' to shore up Tudor authority, devices to maintain law and order or even a means to inculcate ideas of divine providence beyond Puritan circles. They were built on pre-existing and widely shared beliefs in providence: that the crises that the realm faced (war, famine, dearth, disease) were divine warnings and punishments for its sins and that its successes (military victory, peace, prosperity, the birth of royal children) were signs of divine favour and rewards for its godliness. Special worship was ordered not to anaesthetize subjects into passive obedience but to elicit their active participation in assuaging God's wrath through public confession of the realm's sins and reform of subjects' lives and in thanking him publicly for his favour, both of which benefited the whole commonwealth. Those occasions of special worship which appeared to 'shore up' the Tudors' (and Stuarts') authority – accession days, coronation days, and celebrations of the monarch's birthday – originated as independent initiatives and continued as such, subsequently providing a model for anniversary occasions which were widely popular.

Special worship illuminates a number of aspects of public worship that have not previously been noted. The provision of new forms of prayer for special worship shows, first, and most simply, that the BCP was not the only official liturgy used in parishes in England and Wales and in Ireland. It was repeatedly modified or suspended during periods of crisis or celebration to accommodate specially commissioned prayers and liturgies, even after 1552 when the BCP provided occasional prayers for times of war, plague, famine and bad weather. Prayers and liturgies were also issued by bishops for use within their own dioceses. Second, parishioners' liturgical experience of public worship was more varied

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<sup>85</sup> Archbishop Adam Loftus of Dublin to Burghley, 22 September 1590, SP63/154/37, fos 129v–30r.

<sup>86</sup> Lord Deputy Fitzwilliam to Lord Burghley, 16 Jan. and 12 Feb. 1589, SP63/140/22, fo. 89r, SP63/141/21, fo. 54r. Conversely, services at Cork, Ross, Carbery, Kinsale and Clony were very well attended.



than previously assumed, though the greatest differences between the authorized daily liturgy and those for special worship occurred in the period before 1552. Third, liturgical experimentation was not confined to the reform of daily services nor did it end with the publication of the BCP. Special prayers for Henry VIII's campaign in France in 1544 precipitated the creation and authorization of the first, successful, reformed liturgy. After this, the higher clergy continued to experiment with ways in which nationwide special worship could be conducted, devising exhortations, prayers, collects, 'composite psalms' and whole liturgies for parish use before settling on three formats (additional prayers, minor changes to the BCP service, whole liturgies structured similarly to the BCP service).

Special worship also challenges our understanding of conformity and nonconformity in early modern England, Wales and Ireland. It suggests that, despite some recent seminal works, the current narrative of conformity – from the Elizabethan *via media* towards stricter enforcement beginning during James's reign and culminating during that of Charles I – needs further nuance and that a wider range of religious practices and beliefs need to be examined aside from ritual and ceremony. The chronology for liturgical conformity does not match that for ceremony and ritual and suggests that the timing of the move to stricter conformity varied between different aspects of religious practice.<sup>87</sup> Though special prayers were more commonly commissioned from c.1596 than whole liturgies, this was because most occasions of special worship in this period were ordered for events which had usually been marked by prayers and that these events themselves occurred more often than those, such as plague, that were usually marked by whole liturgies. Nor is there any evidence that the late Elizabethan, Jacobean and Caroline regimes suppressed independent special worship, other than at times of particular crisis, such as the 1590s.<sup>88</sup> Changes did not occur until after Charles's accession. In 1626, special worship was brought into closer alignment with the BCP by the commissioning of separate services for morning and evening prayer for the first time. In 1628, with the first special prayer written by Laud, the zealous, godly language that had been typical of Elizabethan forms of

<sup>87</sup> Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake, 'The ecclesiastical policy of King James I', *Journal of British Studies*, 24 (1985), pp. 169–207; Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake, 'The ecclesiastical policies of James I and Charles I', in *The Early Stuart Church, 1603–1642*, ed. Kenneth Fincham (Basingstoke, 1993), pp. 23–49; Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke, *Altars Restored: The Changing Face of English Religious Worship, 1547–c.1700* (Oxford, 2007), esp. pp. 1–7. Though note that Fincham and Tyacke question whether Elizabeth's reign was a *via media*: *Altars Restored*, p. 354.

<sup>88</sup> Edward Phelippes to Lord Burghley, 20 January 1597, BL, Lansdowne MS 83/34, fos 98r–98v; TNA: PRO, SP12/274/1, fo. 1r; TNA: PRO, SP12/273/59, fos 111r–112r.



prayer became much more muted.<sup>89</sup> But, it was not until 1635 that Charles attempted to extend his authority to order special worship by challenging the power of archbishops and bishops to order such worship in their own province or diocese.<sup>90</sup> And, it was not until late 1640, and the politically charged circumstances of the king's expedition against the Covenanters, that strict observance of orders for special worship was enforced, not only against those who refused to observe this occasion but also against ministers who sought to embellish the official prayer with their own words of support for Charles.<sup>91</sup> Even then, official liturgical provision for special worship in Ireland appears to have been limited, if not non-existent, and was reliant on prayers written by archbishops, bishops and ministers.

Special worship also questions whether nonconformity to the BCP was confined solely to Catholics, who saw the prayer book as an anathema, and to Puritans who sought, initially, to modify the BCP or replace it with the Genevan Book of Discipline and, latterly, to abolish it in favour of extempore prayer.<sup>92</sup> From 1552, the state itself deliberately encouraged and organized nonconformity by modifying the BCP service and devising new liturgies to be used temporarily in its stead across the realm during times of crisis and celebration. The state also allowed bishops to authorize special worship in their own dioceses and to compose their own prayers for parishes to use. Both nationwide and diocesan special worship also appear to have encouraged independent and unofficial special worship, such as accession days or celebrations of domestic and foreign events, which the state largely tolerated. Though modifications to the BCP during both these

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<sup>89</sup> Compare the petition 'to the ayde of such as be persecuted for the profession of thy holye name, and to withstande the crueltie of those which be common ennemies as well to the trueth of thy eternal worde, as to theyr owne naturall Prince and countrie, & manifestly to this crowne and Realme of Englande' in *A prayer for the present estate* (London, 1562: RSTC 16504.3), sig. Aii', to Laud's request for 'the reliefe of some of our distressed brethren' and for God 'to blesse this Nauie, and all that serue in it, that they may effect that, about which they are sent, and then returne with safetie, to the honour of thy Name, the comfort of our gracious King Charles, the refreshing and encouragement of all those that wish well to the happinesse and prosperitie of the Reformed Chuirches' in *A prayer to bee publicquely used at the going foorth of the fleete this present yeere*, 1628 (London, 1628: RSTC 16546).

<sup>90</sup> William Laud to Archbishop Spottiswoode of St Andrews, 1 December 1635, TNA: PRO, SP16/303, fo. 17r; same to Viscount Wentworth, 20 November 1636, *The Works of the Most Reverend Father in God, William Laud* (8 vols, Oxford, 1847–60), VII, pp. 298–9.

<sup>91</sup> 'The examination of Thomas Pidgeon', 28 September 1640, TNA: PRO, SP16/468/76, fos 127r–127v; 'Answer of John Bradshaw, clerk, vicar of St Paul's, Bedford', 7 October 1640, TNA: PRO, SP 16/469, fo. 107r; 'Note of the words interposed by Mr Hazard, of Bristol, in the late prayer', 23 September 1640, TNA: PRO, SP16/467/147, fo. 286r.

<sup>92</sup> Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (Oxford, 1967), pp. 243–88 and 291–329; Thomas S. Freeman, "The reformation of the church in this parliament": Thomas Norton, John Foxe and the parliament of 1571, *Parliamentary History*, 16 (1997), pp. 131–47.



types of special worship were not as extensive nor as permanent as those proposed by the Puritans and though special liturgies drew closely on the format and structure of the BCP, these deviations were still significant. In other words, special worship was a form of state-sponsored nonconformity: the (temporary) modification or suspension of the authorized liturgy in favour of specially commissioned prayers and liturgies.

These two aspects underline how 'conformity' and 'nonconformity' were complex, shifting notions, in part dependent on how successive regimes defined conformity and the degree to which they tolerated nonconformity. But 'conformity' and 'nonconformity' were also dependent on 'providential politics' and a shared political outlook between rulers and ruled. Successive regimes were willing to deviate from the official liturgy because they believed that the problems they faced were providential warnings and punishments; that they could only be resolved by nationwide repentance, and that this repentance was more likely to be achieved by tailoring public services to the cause at hand. The leeway afforded to subjects in how they observed special worship, and how subjects responded to such orders was dependent at least as much on why special worship had been ordered as on how, officially, it was to be conducted. For instance, in 1588, the members of the Dedham Conference rejected a motion for an additional thanksgiving fast after the defeat of the Armada 'because they had done it already in their Churches publicly'.<sup>93</sup> The Dedham Puritans were able to set aside their opposition to the Elizabethan Settlement because they shared the regime's views of the significance and meaning of the Armada. In contrast, there was no such consensus between the crown and the Puritans of Bedford and Northampton in August and September 1640 when Charles launched his expedition against the Covenanters. These Puritans not only refused to observe these prayers but also attempted to obfuscate official investigations into their non-observance. Apparitors denied they had received forms of prayer in time or that they had received warrants to deliver them; they and ministers 'forgot' the names of churchwardens to whom they had given forms of prayer, of those who had prevented prayers being read or who were witnesses to non-observance; ministers were hazy over whether their curates had observed services, were dilatory in ensuring they had or simply blamed curates for not reading prayers.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>93</sup> *The Presbyterian Movement in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth as Illustrated by the Minute Book of the Dedham Classis, 1582–1589*, ed. Roland G. Usher (Camden Society, third series, 8; London, 1905), p. 72. For more on the Dedham conference, see *Conferences and Combination Lectures in the Elizabethan Church: Dedham and Bury St Edmunds 1582–1590*, ed. Patrick Collinson, John Craig and Brett Usher (Church of England Record Society, 10; Woodbridge & Rochester, 2003).

<sup>94</sup> TNA: PRO, SP16/468/76, fos 127r–127v; TNA: PRO, SP 16/469, fo. 107r.



The importance of a shared political outlook in the nature of religious conformity and conformity reinforces a final neglected aspect of public worship. Nationwide special prayers, fasts and thanksgivings show that public worship has to be seen as inherently political.<sup>95</sup> This is not primarily because special worship provoked opposition to the liturgical forms used or to the reasons for which it was ordered. Neither is it because the Edwardian<sup>96</sup> and, more particularly, the Elizabethan regimes ordered special worship for new types of event that reflected their own confessional and ideological outlook – Catholic conspiracies, support of foreign Protestant princes at war and for persecuted Protestants abroad – though these are important. Rather it was because the purpose of special worship was to respond to the problems facing the realm (war, famine, dearth, disease, bad weather) and to the successes it enjoyed (military success, the birth of royal children). All of these events were widely believed to be caused by divine providence, whether ‘general’ or ‘particular’, and were thus reactions to the realm’s sins. Though man could alleviate some of these problems through the knowledge that God had given him – such as by quarantining those with plague or fixing grain prices – relief from famine, dearth and bad weather, success in war and the security of dynastic succession could only truly come about by assuaging God’s wrath through prayer, confession of sins and reform of the nation’s behaviour. Moreover, though special services were designed to respond to specific problems, providential politics were not exclusive to it. In many ways, daily public worship had the same political purpose as special worship because it provided a daily forum and support for subjects to confess their sins and reform their lives.

## V

Though forms of prayer were only issued for some royalist occasions after 1641, special worship remained an important part of public worship in England, Wales and Ireland through the Civil War, the Republic, the Restoration and beyond and was a practice that was exported to the British Empire, notably to North America.<sup>97</sup> Indeed, special worship remains an important part of public worship today. It continues to be ordered by the state or, latterly, by diverse churches acting in concert under the

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<sup>95</sup> This argument is made at greater length in Natalie Mears, ‘Public worship and political participation in Elizabethan England’, *Journal of British Studies* 51:1 (2012), pp. 4–25.

<sup>96</sup> See, for instance, *A prayer for victorie and peace* (London, 1548: RSTC 16503).

<sup>97</sup> This will be explored further in a projected volume of essays arising from the conference, ‘National worship in international perspective’ organized in Durham on 12–14 April 2010 by the British State Prayers project.



leadership of the archbishop of Canterbury in times both of crisis (such as in the aftermath of terrorist attacks in the USA in September 2001) and of celebration (royal jubilees).<sup>98</sup> Though set forms of prayer were not ordered by either the parliamentary or republican regimes from 1642 to 1660, they were revived after the Restoration and, indeed, some Elizabethan texts, notably for the plague in 1563, were re-issued with only minor changes. Moreover, liturgical provision for special worship has reflected more general liturgical reform. On the one hand, the Church of England became less prescriptive, or provided a variety of liturgical formats, as the BCP lost its hold as its sole, official liturgy. On the other, during the twentieth century, churches previously hostile to set forms, notably the Scottish Kirk, began to produce their own forms of prayer for special worship. And, all along, special worship has kept up with both popular demands – for instance for personal copies of special liturgies, which were produced in greater numbers and a variety of formats – and developing technology to ensure that large numbers of forms were available quickly: the form of prayer issued for the last occasion of special worship in Britain – the funeral of the Queen Mother – was published online as a PDF.

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<sup>98</sup> Williamson, 'State prayers, fasts and thanksgivings'; *ibid.*, 'National days of prayer: the churches, the state and public worship in Britain, 1899–1957', forthcoming in *English Historical Review*.



Table 2.1      Nationwide special worship in England and Wales and in Ireland, 1534–1641

ID Number	Date and Place of Observance	Description	Format	Frequency and Duration	Text
1535-E	12 Nov (St Paul's)	Procession for the recovery of Francis I	SR	1 service	
1537-E1	27 May (St Paul's)	Te Deums on the announcement of the pregnancy of Queen Jane	SR	1 service	
1537-E2	11–12 Oct (London)	Processions and Te Deums for the safe delivery of the queen in childbirth	SR	2 days	
1537-E3	19 Oct (London)	Processions for the preservation and health of Prince Edward and the health of Queen Jane	SR	1 day	
1537-E4	12 Nov (St Paul's)	Dirges on the death of Queen Jane	SR	1 day	
1541-E1	After 20 May – July (E&W)	Prayers in response to unseasonable weather	SR	frequency unknown, possibly weekly; for c.12 weeks but possibly more than 24 weeks in London	



1541-E2	After 19 July (Cant)	Prayers and collections against the Ottoman invasion of Hungary	P	frequency and duration unknown	not extant
1543-E	After 23 Aug – Sep (Cant)	Prayers and processions in response to unseasonable weather	SR	frequency and duration unknown	
1544-E1	23 May (St Paul's)	Thanksgiving for victories at Edinburgh and Leith	SR	1 service	
1544-E2	After 8 June –Sep (Cant)	Prayers and processions during war	RL	frequency unknown; for c.15 weeks	RSTC 10620
1544-E3	30 Sep and after (E)	Thanksgiving for the victory at Boulogne	SR	1 service	
1544-E4	3 Oct (St Paul's)	Thanksgiving for Henry VIII's safe return from France	SR	1 service	
1545-E1	After 10 Aug (E&W)	Processions for the naval campaign against France	RL	holy and festal days; for c.6 weeks	reprints of RSTC 10620 such as RSTC 10623.5
1545-E2	23 or 24 Sep (St Paul's)	Thanksgiving for the victories at Kelso and Jedburgh and for the departure of the French army from Boulogne	SR	1 service	



ID Number	Date and Place of Observance	Description	Format	Frequency and Duration	Text
1547-E	20 Dec (St Pauls); first possible holy day (rest of Cant)	Thanksgiving for the victory at the Battle of Pinkie	RL	1 service	reprints of RSTC 10620 such as RSTC 10625.3 and 10625.7
1548-E	S and holy days, May, July, Aug (E&W)	Prayer for victory and peace in the Scottish war	P	Sundays and holy days; c.15 weeks or more	RSTC 16503
1549-E	21 July, 10 and 31 Aug (St Paul's)	Prayer and sermons in response to rebellion	BCP + P	3 services, with sermon repeated at Paul's Cross on 21 July	not extant
1550-E	30 Mar and afterwards (St Paul's)	Thanksgiving for the peace with France	TD	1 service	
1551-E	After 18 June – Oct (E&W?)	Prayers in response to the sweating sickness	L	frequency unknown; for c.14 weeks or more	RSTC 16504
1553-E1	After 19 June – until c.6 July (Chapel Royal and possibly elsewhere in E)	Prayer for the king's health	BCP + P	frequency unknown; for a maximum of 3 weeks	RSTC 7508



1553-E2	WFS from 8 Dec (London)	Processions for fair weather	BCP; RL; SR	thrice a week; duration unknown	
1554-E1	Feb (London)	Te Deums for the defeat of Wyatt's Rebellion	SR	1 service	
1554-E2	22–3 Jul (London)	Thanksgivings for Prince Philip's arrival	SR	1 service	
1554-E3	After 27 Nov 1554 – July 1555 (E&W)	Prayers for the safety of the queen in childbirth	SR + P	Possibly daily; for up to 32 weeks	not extant
1555-E1	25 Jan (St Paul's); [Jan and Feb?] (elsewhere in E&W)	Thanksgivings for England's reconciliation with Rome	SR	1 service	
1555-E2	After 23 May – June (Cant)	Prayers for peace between France and the Empire and for the election of the pope	SR	Frequency unknown; for c.5 weeks	
1557-E1	c.15 Aug (St Paul's)	Thanksgiving for the relief of St Quentin	SR	1 service	
1557-E2	19 Sep (London)	Thanksgiving for the victory at Pérone	SR	1 service	
1560-E2	Daily or three times a week, after 7 Jul (Cant)	Prayer for seasonable weather and the success of public affairs	L1	Daily or thrice a week; duration unknown	Strype, <i>Parker</i> , I, p. 179



ID Number	Date and Place of Observance	Description	Format	Frequency and Duration	Text
1562-E1	WFS, after 9 Oct (E)	Prayers for the English army at Newhaven	P	thrice a week; duration unknown	RSTC 16504.3
1562-E2	S 18 Oct (London)	Thanksgiving prayers for the queen's recovery from smallpox	P	1 service	Possibly BL, Lansdowne 116, fos 69r-70r, 75r
1563-E	WFS, beginning Aug, during plague (E&W)	Prayer and order for fast in plague time	L1	thrice a week; for up to 28 weeks	RSTC 16505
1564-E	WFS, 1 beginning 26 Jan? (diocese of London; elsewhere in E&W)	Thanksgiving for the diminution and/or end of the plague	L2	thrice a week; duration unknown	BL, Lansdowne 6, fols 194r-95v; RSTC 16507
1565-E1	WF, July? (dioceses of London, Norwich, Salisbury)	Prayers in response to the Ottoman invasion of Malta	L1	Twice a week; duration unknown	RSTC 16508



1565-E2	WFS, Oct–Dec (Cant)	Thanksgiving prayers for the delivery of Malta and for other victories over the Ottomans	L2	Thrice a week; duration unknown	RSTC 16509
1566-E	WFS, July–Aug (E&W)	Prayers in response to Ottoman invasions of Hungary and elsewhere	L1	Thrice a week; possible for 8 weeks	RSTC 16510
1570-E	Jan onwards? (E&W)	Thanksgiving for the suppression of the Northern Rising	P	frequency and duration unknown	RSTC 13679.2
1572-E	S and holydays, as well as W and F in towns and cities, from 30 Oct (Cant)	Prayer in response to the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre	L1	S and holydays, as well as W and F in towns and cities; duration unknown	WKC 540–7; RSTC 16511
1580-E	WF [after 23 Apr – May] (E&W)	Prayer in response to an earthquake	L1	Twice a week; duration unknown	RSTC 16513
1585-E1	[Feb–Mar] (E&W?)	Prayer and thanksgiving after the failure of the Parry Plot	P	frequency and duration unknown	RSTC 16516
1585-E2	FS, month(s) unknown (London, possibly elsewhere in E&W)	Prayers in response to weather and other punishments	P	FS; duration unknown	RSTC 16515



ID Number	Date and Place of Observance	Description	Format	Frequency and Duration	Text
1586-E1	WF [May 1586–Jan 1587] (Cant)	Prayers during dearth and war	L1	WF; duration c.36 weeks	RSTC 4587
1586-E2	After 24 Aug (E&W)	Prayer and thanksgiving for the preservation of the queen and realm from popish plots	L1	frequency and duration unknown	RSTC 16517
1587-E	[Feb–Aug?] (E&W)	Prayer and thanksgiving fit for the present time	L1	frequency and duration unknown	RSTC 16518
1588-E1	After 10 July – Aug (E&W)	Prayer during the threat of a Spanish invasion	L1	Thrice a week; for up to 18 weeks	RSTC 16519
1589-Ir	[W 26 Jan 1589?] Dublin; before W 12 Feb 1589 (elsewhere in Ireland)	Thanksgiving prayers in response to the failure of the Spanish Armada	U	frequency and duration unknown	
1588-E2	19 Nov (E&W)	Thanksgivings in response to the failure of the Spanish Armada	L2	1 service	RSTC 16520
1590-E1	After 6 Mar (Cant)	Prayers during the threat of a Spanish invasion	L2	thrice a week; duration unknown	RSTC 16522
1590-E2	[Apr–Aug?] (E&W)	Prayers for the success of the Henry IV	P	frequency and duration unknown	RSTC 16523



1593-E	W [summer–autumn?] (E&W)	Prayers in response to plague	L1	Weekly (W); duration unknown	RSTC 16524
1594-E	[Mar] (E&W)	Prayer and thanksgiving for the preservation of the queen and realm	L2	frequency and duration unknown	RSTC 16525 and RSTC 16525.7
1596-E1	After 3 June (Cant)	Prayer for the success of the army and navy	P	Thrice a week and festival days; duration unknown but probably ended with 1596-E3	RSTC 16526
1596-E2	Aug (E&W)	Prayer of thanksgiving for the continued success of the forces	P	Probably 1 service	RSTC 16527
1596-E3	WF, after c.27 Dec	Prayers and fasts during plague time	BCP	Twice a week; duration unknown	BCP
1597-E	July (E&W)	Prayers for the success of the forces	P	frequency and duration unknown	RSTC 16528
1598-E	[Nov?] (E&W)	Prayer and thanksgiving for the preservation of the queen and realm	L2	frequency and duration unknown	RSTC 16529
1599-E	[Apr–Aug] (E&W)	Prayer for Essex's campaign in Ireland	P	frequency and duration unknown	RSTC 16530



ID Number	Date and Place of Observance	Description	Format	Frequency and Duration	Text
1601-E	Feb  (E&W)	Prayers for the state of the realm	p	frequency and duration unknown	RSTC 16531
1602-E	Jan (E&W?)	Prayers and thanksgivings for the victory at Kinsale	p	frequency and duration unknown	no form issued
1603-E	WFS and holy days [?Apr onwards] (E&W)	Prayers and order for a fast in response to plague	L1	WFS and holy days; duration unknown but possibly for up to 78 weeks	RSTC 16532
1604-E	WFS [autumn?] (London?)	Thanksgiving prayers for retreat of plague, and prayers for places still afflicted	L2	WFS; duration unknown	RSTC 16533
1605-E1	[Jan-Mar?] (E&W?)	Prayers for the queen's safety in childbirth	p	frequency and duration unknown	RSTC 16534
1605-E2	[After 8 Apr] (E&W?)	Thanksgiving prayers after the queen's safe delivery of a child	p	frequency and duration unknown	RSTC 16535
1606-E	[Jan-May?] (E&W?)	Prayers for the queen's safety in childbirth	p	frequency and duration unknown	RSTC 16537
1611-E	(E&W?)	Prayer in response to drought	L2	frequency and duration unknown	RSTC 16538



1613-E	(E&W?)	Prayer in response to heavy rain	L2	frequency and duration unknown	RSTC 16539
1625-E	W 20 July; W (prayers and fasting), FS (prayers only) during plague (E&W)	Prayers and fasting in response to plague	L1	WFS; duration unknown but c.25 weeks	RSTC 16540
1625-Ir	W, beginning Oct (Ir)	Fast in response to the plague in England	Fa	W; duration unknown	none found
1626-E1	S 29 Jan (London, Westm, adjacent places); S 19 Feb (elsewhere E&W)	Thanksgiving day for the retreat of plague	L2	S; duration unknown	RSTC 16542
1626-E2	W 5 July (London, Westm, adjacent places); W 2 Aug (elsewhere E&W)	Fast in response to war and plague	L3	W; duration unknown	RSTC 16543
1626-E3	After 21 Sep (E&W)	Prayers in support of Christian IV of Denmark	P	frequency and duration unknown	not found
1627-E	Daily [?:June to Nov] (E&W)	Prayer for use while the king's forces are abroad	P	Daily; duration unknown but c.24 weeks	RSTC 16545



ID Number	Date and Place of Observance	Description	Format	Frequency and Duration	Text
1628-E1	Saturday 5 Apr. (London); Monday 21 Apr (elsewhere in E&W)	Fast in time of war	L3	1 day	RSTC 16547.5
1628-Ir	Weekly [May-July? (Ir?)	Fast	Fa	Weekly for 8 weeks	not found/ none
1628-E2	[after 22 Aug-Sep] (E&W)	Prayer to be used at the departure of the fleet	P	Frequency unknown; but possibly c.5 weeks	RSTC 16546
1628-E3	[autumn-winter] (E&W)	Prayer for Henrietta Maria's safe delivery of a child	P	frequency and duration unknown	RSTC 16548
W 18 Feb (Lon, Westm, Southwark, adjacent places): F 20 March (elsewhere E&W)	14 Feb 1629	Fast for the preservation of the king, his realms, and all Reformed churches	L3	1 day	RSTC 16547



1630-E1	[?Jan-June] (E&W)	Prayer for Henrietta Maria's safe delivery of a child	P	frequency and duration unknown	RSTC 16548.3
1630-E2	[June] (E&W)	Thanksgiving prayer after Henrietta Maria's safe delivery of a child	P	frequency and duration unknown	RSTC 16549
1630-Ir	Thursday 15 July (Dublin; possibly elsewhere in Ir)	Thanksgiving for the birth of a prince	U	frequency and duration unknown	not found/ none
1631-E1	E&W	Prayer for Henrietta Maria's safe delivery of a child	P	frequency and duration unknown	RSTC 16549.5
1631-E2	[Nov] (E&W)	Thanksgiving prayer after Henrietta Maria's safe delivery of a child	P	frequency and duration unknown	RSTC 16550
1632-E	[Dec] (E&W)	Thanksgiving prayer for the recovery of the king's health	P	frequency and duration unknown	RSTC 16550.3
1633-E1	[June] (E&W)	Prayer for Henrietta Maria's safe delivery of a child	P	frequency and duration unknown	RSTC 16550.5
1633-E2	[Oct] (E&W)	Thanksgiving prayer after Henrietta Maria's safe delivery of a child	P	frequency and duration unknown	RSTC 16550.7



ID Number	Date and Place of Observance	Description	Format	Frequency and Duration	Text
1635-E	(E&W)	Prayer for Henrietta Maria's safe delivery of a child	P	frequency and duration unknown	RSTC 16552
1636-E1	[Jan] (E&W)	Thanksgiving prayer after Henrietta Maria's safe delivery of a child	P	frequency and duration unknown	RSTC 16555.5
1636-E2	(E&W)	Prayer for Henrietta Maria's safe delivery of a child	P	frequency and duration unknown	RSTC 16555
1636-E3	W, beginning Oct (E&W)	Weekly fast in response to the plague	L3	W; duration unknown but possibly for 12 weeks	RSTC 16553
1639-E	[Apr] (E&W)	Prayer for the king's military expedition to Scotland (First Bishops' War)	P	Daily; duration unknown but c.14 weeks	RSTC 16556
1640-E1	W 8 July (E&W)	Fast for averting the plague and other judgments	L3	1 day	RSTC 16557
1640-E2	[July–Aug] (E&W)	Prayer for the king's expedition against the Covenanters	P	Frequency unknown; duration unknown but possibly maximum of 10 weeks	RSTC 16558.5



1640-E3	Tuesday 17 Nov (London, suburbs, adjoining parishes): Tuesday 8 Dec (elsewhere E&W)	Fast to remove the plague and other judgements	L3	1 day	RSTC 16559
1641-ES	Tuesday 7 Sep (E&W, Scotland)	Thanksgiving day for the conclusion of peace between Scotland and England	U	1 day	no form issued
1641-Ir	F weekly [starting Dec] (Ir)	Fast	Fa	weekly; duration unknown but c.20 weeks	none found
1641-E	W 22 Dec (parliament, London); Th 23 Dec (Westm); Th 20 Jan 1642 (elsewhere in E&W); last W of every month during the Irish Rebellion (E&W)	Fast in response to the distressed state of Ireland	Fa	monthly; duration unknown	no form issued
1642-Ir	F monthly, beginning May (Ir)	Fast during the Irish Rebellion	Fa	monthly; duration unknown	not found/ none



**Abbreviations in Table 2.1**

SR	Sarum Rite
P	Prayers
BCP	BCP
TD	Te Deums
RL	Revised litany (1544)
Fa	Fast
L1	Liturgy (first Elizabethan format)
L2	Liturgy (second Elizabethan format)
L3	Liturgy (Caroline version)
U	Unspecified or unknown
W	Wednesday
F	Friday
S	Sunday
Cant	Province of Canterbury
London	City of London
Westm	City of Westminster
E&W	England and Wales
Ir	Ireland